

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)
)
The Development of Operational,)
Technical and Spectrum Requirements)
For Meeting Federal, State and Local)
Public Safety Agency Communication)
Requirements Through the Year 2010)
)
Establishment of Rules and Requirements)
For Priority Access Service)

WT Docket No. 96

RECEIVED
DEC 11 1997
FCC MAIL ROOM

To: The Commission

**COMMENTS OF
THE CALIFORNIA PUBLIC-SAFETY RADIO ASSOCIATION
A CHAPTER OF
THE ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC-SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICIALS -
INTERNATIONAL**

The California Public-Safety Radio Association (CPRA), a chapter of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials - International (APCO), hereby offers Comment in this proceeding.

CPRA proudly represents the telecommunications and regulatory interests of all Public Safety services providers from throughout ten Southern California counties having a combined population in excess of 20 million, and has previously offered Comment in this proceeding as well as the related

1049
APCO Files rec'd

ET Docket No. 97-157, the Reallocation of Television Channels 60-69, the 746-806 MHz Band.

CPRA is concerned that in this proceeding the Commission may not be fully aware of the technical barriers to the timely use of the spectrum in this band. The Final Report of the Public Safety Wireless Advisory Committee (PSWAC) explains in great detail Public Safety's spectrum needs, both immediate and through the year 2010, and yet in this proceeding there appears to be evidence of considerable confusion with respect to what is needed, how much is needed, what would be cost effective, and what would satisfy the requirements of the user. It may be helpful to the Commission--particularly its new members--to revisit the PSWAC Final Report and its recommendations before issuing further Rulemakings in this proceeding.

Interoperability

It appears that the Commission believes Public Safety's need for spectrum dedicated to interoperability is far greater than actual requirements. If spectrum from UHF-TV channels 60-69 is allocated for interoperability, the allocation should not exceed 10 voice channels and two high-speed data channels. We question in principle the Commission's intent to allocate large amounts of spectrum in this band for interoperability for several reasons. Most existing Public Safety operations throughout the nation are largely confined to VHF highband and UHF frequencies, and this is where much of the interoperability is needed. To be sure, Public Safety needs more UHF and VHF highband channels. There remains, of course, a requirement for some interoperability channels in the TV channels 60-69 bands, but only of the magnitude specified above.

Trunking

The use of trunking technology is not appropriate for interoperability, as it is not cost effective and would not meet the operational needs of the users. Most requirements for interoperability are and will remain direct unit-to-unit simplex communications. Trunking requires infrastructure, which will not always be available.

Use by Federal Agencies

CPRA believes that federal government agencies should have access to some existing and proposed mutual aid channels.

Regional Planning

Regional planning has served the needs of Public Safety very well. It should be noted that these same regional planners who developed and implemented the NPSPAC Regional Plan have significant experience and education in the principles of frequency coordination, and are uniquely qualified to perform this task. It is not necessary to form new Regional Planning Committees as the planners of the NPSPAC spectrum are still active in each region. If new committees were to be established, their make-up would essentially be comprised of the same individuals as the existing bodies, as there are only so many qualified volunteers to be found. CPRA recommends that the existing regional plans be modified to include the new spectrum, with the planning function performed by the committees that are in place.

Regional Committee Funding

CPRA believes that regional committees should be reimbursed for reasonable expenses, i.e., the regional planner for the band would pay expenses and be reimbursed from coordination monies.

CPRA recommends that the frequency coordinator for Public Safety allocations in the new spectrum be APCO-International, because of its vast experience gained in the NPSPAC regional process and the great strength and reputation it has exhibited for Public Safety.

Band Channel Plan

CPRA favors 12.5 kHz channel spacing with 11.25 kHz emission bandwidth. The channels could be aggregated for TDMA systems or 25 kHz (19.2 kbps) data channels. The high-speed data channels should be 150 kHz (384 kbps) channel bandwidth. These could be aggregated for video applications (maximum of four per video channel).

Channels should be assigned based on specific signal levels for coverage and interference (see Region Five Plan for model).

Operational Use and Frequencies for Interoperability

Since most Police, Fire and EMS Services operate on VHF highband and UHF, Public Safety has an urgent need for frequencies to be made available in these bands. We support proposals that the 380-400 MHz band and the TV channels 7-13 bands be strongly considered, as recommended in the PSWAC Report.

Assignment of Channels 63, 64, 68 and 69 to Public Safety

CPRA wants to reiterate that it strongly supports the use of channels 63, 64, 68 and 69 for Public Safety. Our emergency services agencies need these channels desperately in the Southern California area, which, along with New York, is where congestion is greatest, as is the corresponding need for relief. The spectrum requirements for Los Angeles and New York were used to document the requirements and recommendations contained in the PSWAC Final Report. It is ironic and unacceptable that a critical region such as Southern California would receive nothing, while having documented the most critical need. We strongly urge the Commission to reconsider the DTV channel assignments, and address this critical problem for Los Angeles and other areas. One potential avenue toward resolution would be to require those stations holding only construction permits to receive only one channel, to be used for DTV operations. In the Los Angeles area, this would make available two channels that could be assigned to the stations with DTV assignments on channels 68 and 69. Secondly, there are two stations in Southern California which currently operate on channels 63 and 64, and an expedited migration to their DTV assignments would speed the availability of those channels for reassignment to Public Safety.

Construction Requirements

Section 90.629 of the Rules addresses the required justification for 800 and 900 MHz extensions, and sets forth requirements which we believe are realistic and appropriate. The construction of new, modern, spectrally efficient Public Safety communications systems employing digital technologies trunking, simulcast operations, consolidation, etc., increase both the cost and magnitude of such

endeavors, requiring extended time lines for funding and completion. It would be unrealistic to expect anything less than the current five year “slow growth” cycle for new construction.

Television Interference

As CPRA and other Commenters have pointed out previously, the Commission’s digital television channel assignments for the metropolitan Southern California region leave little if any opportunity for Public Safety providers to realize any use of the proposed UHF-TV channel allocation. The Commission can not and should not continue to pursue any “nationwide” interoperability scheme which ignores the needs of one of the nation’s most populous regions. Agencies throughout the United States often call on their counterparts from Southern California for specialized expertise in the aftermath of floods, fires, seismic events, etc., and in responding to such requests these agencies have an immediate need to establish communications upon arrival. The Commission should ensure that the radio equipment already in their possession has the capability of meeting this need.

Cellular Priority Access

CPRA recommends that state and local emergency providers have the same priority level as federal defense and law enforcement agencies. PSWAC pointed out that for commercial systems to have viability as a reasonable alternative to dedicated Public Safety spectrum, priority access would have to be afforded during peak periods of traffic congestion in emergencies and disasters. PSWAC said the recommendations made by National Communications Systems (NCS), do not go far enough to satisfy the needs of Public Safety.

Conclusion

In this proceeding, the Commission will establish service rules for the use of a significant quantity of spectrum. It is imperative that these rules establish a level playing field for all Public Safety users, and meet the needs as detailed in the PSWAC Final Report. As always, CPRA and other regional chapters of APCO-International stand ready and willing to provide whatever level of assistance the Commission deems appropriate in ensuring the direct involvement and participation of all affected parties. For Public Safety and the safety of America, we want nothing but the best.

Respectfully submitted,

CALIFORNIA PUBLIC-SAFETY RADIO ASSOCIATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Acosta", written in a cursive style.

Jim Acosta, Chapter President
Post Office Box 39100
Downey, CA 90241

(029686cp)